Numb. 88.

THE OBSERVATOR.

of the Report of the French *Armies having joyned the Elector of* Bavaria. *Of the Falsehoods of the* Paris *Gazette. Of the Truth of the* English *Gazette. The Success of the* French *by Land cannot Counter-Ballance their Loss at Sea. Of the Bill before the House for carrying on the War in the* West-Indies. *Mr.* Wallers *Verses on the Glory of the* English *Navy. Of the Seamens Provisions. Of the Medicines for Sea Service.*

From Saturday February the 20th, to Wednesday February the 24th, 170⅗.

Country-m. MAster *Observator*, the *Jacks* and *High-Flyers* at *London*, make a wonderful boasting on the Account of the *French* Army's having passed the *Rhine*, and being got into the Emperours Territories; I never saw Men so elevated in all my Life, the *Jacks*, *Jesuits* and *Tantivy's* are all run mad, and are looking over *Jack Sadbury's* Prognostications, to know what will be the effect of this happy Action, as they call it. 'Tis a great pity that those Men should insult the Government, by Acclamations of Joy in Publick Coffee-Houses, at every Accident which happens to the Disadvantage of us and our Allies.

Obs. If the *French* have joyned the Elector of *Bavaria*, it will prove a very unhappy Diversion to the Armies of the Allies, and no good Man will rejoice at any stop put to the Success of the Confederates. But I don't find this News confirm'd by any Foreign Print, but by the *Paris* Gazette, which is no more than a Politick Novel, stuft up with Feats of *Chivalry*, and Stories of Knight Errantry, no more to be credited, than those of *Armadis de Gaul*, or *Bevis* of *Southampton*. You must always consider *News Papers*, as coming from the Persons that Write them, and the Faction they Write for. Don't you observe in some of our own Papers, the Visible turns of *Jacobitism* and *French Address*? And have not these Papers lately, by some of the *Jacobite* Authors been recommended as Authentick? It is a certain sign of the ill-state of a Government, and that it labours under pressing difficultys, when its Ministers are forced to put false *glosses* on *Publick Occurrences*, and to Magnify every little Success of their Arms, and to misrepresent the most signal Enterprizes of their Enemies: you never find our Queens *Gazette*, fill'd with things of this Nature: We don't give Accounts of remarkable Enterprizes by hear-say. We are not (Blessed be God) so great strangers to good Successes as to make a Noise upon the first Notices of an Advantage, we can wait the coming of an Express, or the Arrival of a Mail, and have our News confirmed before we make it Publick. I don't know, Honest *Country-man*, but this piece of News may prove as true as many others in the *Paris* Legend. You know 'twas but last Week some of our News-Mongers took a Trip to Sea in the *Weymouth*, and made the Captain Fight upon his Stumps, and take a *French* Man of War of 60 Guns, and bring her into *Plimouth*. If we cannot relye on Stories at Home, Pray let us suspend our Judgments in relation to those from Abroad.

But supposing this to be true, I hope 'tis no dead Blow to the Confederacy, 'tis not an irretrievable Push; We are not all as Dead as Herrings; the *French* are Vigilant enough, and are to be commended for it. But the Face of War, is very variable. He that by *Stratagem*, or *Conduct*, enters the Field first, is not always the last in it. The Season of the Year is no way favourable to Camps, the *French* will have time enough to blow their Nails against Spring, and if their Limbs are chill'd, the Grand Effort they talk of may happen to be benumb'd. Had the *French* a Superiority of Forces, the Advantages they could thereby get over the Confederates by Land, would in no wise counter-Ballance their Losses by Sea, under a good management of the *English Fleet:* Herein is the real strength of the Confederacy, and this is the thing we ought to mind above all; tho' our Land Armies are no inconsiderable part of our strength. And the great Men at the Helm can do their Country no truer Service at this Juncture, than to use the greatest Endeavours to make the Navy steer the course, the present State of the Confederacy naturally directs them into.

Country-m. Pray, Sir, are Admiral *Bembows* Run-away Captains hang'd? We shall never do any Feats at Sea till *Treachery* and *Cowardice* do meet with their just Rewards. I went t'other Day by Water from *Hungerford-Stairs* to the *Faulcon*, and the old Fellow that Row'd me entertain'd me all the way with Stories of Sea Actions during the Usurpation of *Oliver Cromwell*. He said the Usurper had the true Notion of making *England* Formidable by a Fleet, which he kept in the most exact Discipline by the just Maxims of *Rewards and Punishments*. He would pawn his Plate to pay his Seamen; they never wanted good Pay and good Victuals, and therefore the States Fleet never wanted able Seamen; and such Encouragement was given to Bravery, that they never wanted able Commanders; and he told me at that time, a Man might have gone thro' the whole Fleet and not have heard one Oath. And this was the Character of Admiral *Bembow*, that he was no *Swearer* nor *Drunkard*; and I find by the old Mans Discourse, *Sobriety* and *Virtue* in a Sea Commander is full as Necessary as *Courage* and *Conduct*.

Obs. I am afraid we shall miss that great Man, Admiral *Bembow*, in the *West-Indies*. The Honourable House of Commons are now passing a Bill for carrying on a War against *France* and *Spain* in the *West Indies*, which Bill, I am told, is so wisely contrived for the Advantage of the Confederacy, and the good of *England*, that our Representatives could have done nothing bet-

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ter for the common good of their People, especially the Trading part of the Nation; for what we get in the *West-Indies* in the War, in all likelyhood, will be our Own in Peace; and by a Settlement of new Colonies abroad will occasion the Exportation of Manufactures, the Encrease of which, will find Employment for our Necessitous Poor? 'Tis unknown what Profit such Acquisitions would bring to the *Crown* of *England*, I believe at the first Settlement of an *English* Colony at *Virginia*, it was little thought, that the Duties of the Weed *Tobacco* would prove the best Jewel of the *Crown* of the Kings of *England?* Who ever reads Captain *Hack's* Collection of Voyages, *Dampier*, *Wafer*, *Basil*, *Ringrot*, and others, will soon conclude how valuable a Trade the *Spanish West-Indies* would be to the *English*; and I am bold to affirm, the *English* at this Juncture are capable of establishing such a Trade to their Posterity, who will say their Fore-fathers had not all their Eye-Teeth if they overlook a thing of such Consequence. We have a Fleet sufficient to accomplish it, and I know no Reason why we should not do as great feats with our Fleet now, as our Forefathers have done before us, Your mentioning the Discourse you had with the old Waterman, touching the Glory of the *English* Navy, in the time of the Usurper, brings to my Mind, some Lines of that great Man *Edmond Waller* Esq; in his Anniversary of the Protectors Government, where he introduces the Foreign Princes, as amazed, and frighted at the Power of the *English* Navy. pag. 18. 19.

Is this, saith one, the Nation that we Read
Spent with both Wars, under a Captain Dead?
Yet rig a Navy, while we Dress us late,
And e're we Dine, Race and Rebuild a State.
What Oaken Forests, and what Golden Mines!
What Mints of Men, what Union of Designs!
Unless their Ships do, as their Fowl proceed,
Of shedding Leaves, that with their Ocean breed!
Their's are not Ships, but rather Arks of War,
And Beaked Promontories Sail'd from far;
Of Floating Islands, a new hatched Nest;
A Fleet of Worlds, of other Worlds in Quest:
An hideous Shoal of Wood-Leviathans,
Arm'd with three Tire of Brazen Hurricans;
That thro' the Centre shoot their thund'ring side,
And sink the Earth that does at Anchor ride.
What Refuge to escape them can be found,
Whose watry Leaguers all the World surround?
Needs must we all their Tributaries be,
Whose Navy's hold the Sluces of the Sea.
The Ocean is the Fountain of Command,
But that, if took, we Captives are at Land.
And those that have the Waters for their Share,
Can quickly leave us, neither Earth nor Air.

Country-m. I protest, Mr. *Observator*, these are special good Lines, come, come, I hope to see the *English* Navy as Glorious as ever, now we come to hanging of Runaway *Captains*.

Obs. I can assure you our Sailors are as good Men as ever, and were they as well Victualled and Paid, they would do Wonders. But I know not by what Unhappy mistake in Politicks in the late War, our Navy signify'd but very little either to the Security of our Realms, or Trade, and tho' we had so many Instances of *Cowardice* and *Treachery*, no one suffer'd during that War, that ever I heard of; but two or three Warrant Officers for Embezelling Stores. When the greatest Discouragement has been given to such as have served their Country, Faithfully in the Navy; and in Relation to the Constitution of the People of *England*, it is an Eternal Truth, *That we cannot more effectually Betray'd than in our Naval Affairs.*

'Tis In vain to recriminate on former Managers in the Navy, the best Service we can do our Country, is to mend the Management, and that in two particulars.

First, a due care of the Seamens Provision for the Lives of the Sailors depend upon the Management: Men that are Exposed to Labour, to Storms and Tempests, to Heat and Wet, have need of the best Food; a Wet Back and a Hungry Belly, are two Enemies would cool the Courage of an *Alexander*; the Meat and Drink which stinks when it is received into the Mouth, will never Sweeten the Blood in the Veins; but will Enervate the Strength, and Cause Diseases in the Bodies of Seamen.

And therefore, in the second Place, great care ought to be taken of the Medicinal Stores that are laid in for the Service of the Sea as well as of the Land Forces; 'twould make a Man's Heart Ake to think of the Corruption, in this Point, in the late War; nay, only in that single Drug *Rheubarb*, whereof great Quantities of Rotten and Corrupt Roots, were bought for the Service of our Forces; and the Government Paid for it, as if it had been Good and Serviceable. A certain Apothecary near *Bow-lane* at that time, by these means, got a large (I dare say a good) Estate. Every Surgeons Chest ought to be examined, before it is taken on Board, and the Person who makes up the Medicines ought to be responsible for their Defect.

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